



February 26, 2023

Senator Rick Lopes and Representative Joseph P. Gresko, Co-Chairs  
Senator Jan Hochadel and Representative Christine Palm, Vice Chairs  
Environment Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200  
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Support for packaging EPR provisions of HB 6664, An Act Managing Waste and Creating a Waste Authority

Dear Co-Chairs Lopes and Gresko, Vice Chairs Hochadel and Palm, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Bob Wall, and I am the Chair of the Sustainable Fairfield Task Force

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of the packaging EPR provisions of HB 6664.

Municipalities such as Fairfield have seen dramatic increases in prices to dispose of waste and recycling. Packaging, particularly over-packaging, is a significant contributing factor. Manufacturers currently bear no responsibility for disposal of packaging and the onus is put on residents to try to figure out whether that clamshell packaging that consists of both plastic and cardboard needs to be separated before they put it in the bin or whether to just throw it out. With no incentive for manufacturers to simplify their packaging and create a more recycle -ready pack, this will only continue, and waste and recycling costs will continue to stress an already stressed Connecticut system.

Fairfield currently spends close to \$450,000.00 each year to cover the costs of our residents' recycling, which represents a dramatic increase over the small profits we used to get before China's National Sword went into effect.

Today consumers pay three times for packaging, first they pay for the packaging as part of the cost of goods, then they pay for the collection, recycling and disposal of that packaging through their hauler fees and municipal recycling costs. Finally, they pay indirectly for the pollution caused by the production and post-consumer disposal of that packaging. HB 6664 can change this with packaging extended producer responsibility (EPR).

Manufacturers would now be responsible for financing and managing their post-consumer packaging. Four states – Maine, Oregon, Colorado, and California – have

already enacted packaging EPR laws and about a dozen others, like Connecticut, are considering such bills this year. If manufacturers were responsible for absorbing these costs, we should expect to see a different kind of packaging, packaging that is more recycle- ready and sustainable.

EPR policies have been in place for years in both Europe and parts of Canada. They have increased recycling rates in those countries and provinces and provided sustainable financing. CT DEEP recently issued a proposed update to the state's Comprehensive Materials Management Strategies report that estimates an EPR bill could save residents \$50 million in recycling expenses by 2028 and reduce Connecticut's in-state waste capacity deficit by up to 190,000 tons each year.

A packaging EPR law will provide options for municipalities to save money on recycling. Packaging EPR does not raise prices for consumers. A study conducted by Resource Recycling Systems and funded by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality analyzed consumer product prices before and after EPR legislation passed in Canada and found no evidence that they increased; in Europe, where programs have been in operation for more than three decades, producers themselves report that prices have also remained stable.

We strongly encourage Connecticut to adopt packaging EPR legislation so that Fairfield and other municipalities will no longer have to carry the financial burden of recycling the packaging chosen by brand owners.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed bill.

Sincerely,

Bob Wall, Chair  
Sustainable Fairfield Task Force